

Sinclair James - English Communication Language in Asia



Is English Language a Hindrance to Communication for Foreigners in Asia?

One of the hesitations of westerners in coming to Asia is the language barrier. True, Asia has been a melting pot of different aspects of life that in every country, there is a distinct characteristic and a culture which would seem odd to someone who grew up in an entirely different perspective. Language is one of the most flourishing uniqueness of Asian nations. Although their boundaries are emphasized by mere walls which can be broken down easily, the brand of each individual can still be determined on the language they use or most comfortable with. Communication may be a problem as it is an issue which neighboring countries also encounter on each other. Message relays or even simple gestures, if interpreted wrongly can cause conflicts. Indeed, the complaints are valid.

However, on the present day number of American and European visitors and the boost in tourism economies, language barriers seem to have been surpassed. Perhaps, the problem may not even exist at all.

According to English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Asian countries are not altogether illiterate in speaking and understanding the universal language. If so, there are countries which

can even speak English as fluent as any native can. Take for example the Philippines.

Once in Manila, the country's capital, you will find thousands of individuals representing different nationalities. The center for business growth in the country, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) has proven the literacy of the people in conversing using the international language. Clients from abroad prefer Filipinos in dealing with customers concern since they can easily comprehend grasp and explain things in English. ELPT and IELTS did not even include the Philippines in the list of the top English speaking nations in Asia since they are already considered one of the best and most fluent in this field.

Other neighboring Asian countries also send their citizens to the Philippines to learn English. With a mixture of British and American English being used in everyday conversations, the Philippines has to be considered to be included in the top 5 most native English speakers.

You may even be surprised to meet a young child in Manila who has not gone to school or mingled with foreigners but can speak and understand English. Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and most Asian countries, if indeed all, can also easily understand and speak English.

It seems that the concern for miscommunication has completely no basis and remains a groundless issue. Maybe perhaps, those who say this just want to find a dumb excuse?

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